

SUPERINTENDENT REEVES ADDRESSES COMMUNITY MEMBERS AT LIBRARY FORUM

Washington School for the Deaf Superintendent Todd Reeves spoke to a group of community members at the Vancouver Library. As a new leader in the community, Reeves was requested to speak about what attracted him to Clark County and the challenges he faces in his current role as superintendent.

- When people ask me why in the world would I accept this job with all of it's challenges, I tell them where would I be if it wasn't for the school for the deaf.
- This is an opportunity for me to repay a debt that I owe the school. Everything I have to be thankful for and have received I can trace back to this place.
- I left my teaching position to attend Georgetown Law School and ended up returning eight weeks later for personal reasons. The school and my fellow teachers welcomed me back without asking any questions. A friend encouraged me to go back to law school and I ended up graduating from University of Washington with my law degree. The school gave me direction when things were askew in my life.
- Returning to Vancouver is a homecoming for my wife Jodi and I. We met while working at the school as teachers and were married here in Vancouver.
- Being parents gave Jodi and I additional motivation to accept this position. My wife and I moved to Vancouver from Gig Harbor. We never thought we would leave Gig Harbor until we became parents. We adopted two deaf boys and in order for them to get education and services they had to be bussed an hour each way to another school district. I always think about that saying, "Life is what happens while you're busy making other plans." For my eight- and five-year old sons, life was what was happening while they were stuck in traffic on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, and we knew we had to do something to improve the quality of life for our children. Both of our children attend the school, and now at four o'clock in the afternoon they are either pulling on their soccer shoes or finishing their homework, rather than sitting on a little yellow school bus.
- When we first adopted our children they had no language. Every day we see them blossoming. It's a wonderful opportunity for our children to live a balanced life.
- We have received a warm reception since moving to Vancouver. We are very thankful to be living in a community that in 1886 welcomed a diverse population in a time when it wasn't popular to do so.
- I am readjusting to the demands of a residential facility. For example, when the recent snowstorm closed down other schools, our students were stuck here on campus. We went out to the homes of staff members and brought them to the

school. It is amazing to me how our staff bonds together and overcomes all the odds to perform above and beyond expectations.

- Our goal is to let the state of Washington know that we are a state agency that not only serves 110 students here at our school, but all deaf and hard of hearing students throughout the state. If a student completes their K-12 education and has not in some way been touched by our outreach services, then we have left our destiny unfulfilled. We have the capacity to go out and serve students anywhere in the state. We are ready to help regardless of where the student attends school.
- A challenge facing every school right now is student achievement. I believe that education is about inspiration. It is as much about inspiring students as it about inspiring parents to take an active role in their child's success.
- The condition of the buildings on campus is a great concern to me. Washington School for the Deaf needs to establish a student environment that compares equally to other schools in the state of Washington.

Other information:

- Jodi and Todd Reeves have two adopted deaf sons, Shay (age 8, from China) and Seth (age 6, from Thailand).
- The Reeves will adopt their third deaf child, a daughter, to be named Torrey (age 4), in July from China. Torrey also has a heart condition that requires surgery when she arrives.
- His last position was as director of special education for the Tacoma School District.
- Reeves was diagnosed with a hearing loss at the age of 13.
- Jodi Reeves is currently working as an itinerant teacher for the Columbia Regional Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, in Hillsboro, Oregon.